



US Army Corps
of Engineers®

Lessons Learned from Implementation of Regional Biological Opinions in the South Atlantic and the Gulf of Mexico

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USACE Hopper Dredging

- **17% of Corps Dredging involves Hopper dredges**
- **~80% of Hopper dredge Requirements in the Atlantic-Gulf Regions**
 - **~17% Atlantic**
 - **60% Gulf**



Endangered Species Act (ESA) 1973

Purpose:

“... to provide a means whereby the ecosystems upon which endangered and threatened species depend may be conserved...”

“... that all Federal departments and agencies shall seek to conserve endangered and threatened species...”

ESA Protected Resources Associated with Hopper Dredging

- **Sea Turtles -Atlantic and Gulf**
- **Northern Right Whale-Atlantic**
- **Atlantic Sturgeon -Atlantic**
- **Gulf Sturgeon -Gulf**



Federally-Listed Sea Turtles Inhabiting Navigation Channels



- **Loggerhead - Threatened**



- **Green - Endangered & Threatened**



- **Kemp's ridley - Endangered**



- **Hawksbill - Endangered**



- **Leatherback - Endangered**

Hopper Dredging Projects With Sea Turtle Monitoring

**65+ Channel Projects
that monitoring for
sea turtles**

**38+ have documented
incidental takes of
sea turtles**



Section 7 ESA Procedures

- **Corps prepares Biological Assessment (BA)**
- **NMFS prepares Biological Opinion (BO)**
- **-Incidental (Authorized) Take Statement**
 - Reasonable and Prudent Measures (Mandatory)**
 - Conservation Measures (Recommendations)**

Principals involved with USACE Hopper Dredging



- **65+ projects**
- **11 Districts**
- **4 Divisions**
- **4 Corps Labs**
- **Corps
Headquarters**
- **3 NMFS Regions**
- **NMFS
Headquarters**
- **15 States**
- **4 Observer Companies**
- **20 Hopper Dredges**
- **5 Dredging
Companies**
- **US Navy**
- **Other Stakeholders**
- **Regulatory**

USACE Cross-Functional-Cross Divisional Offices Supporting Corps Hopper Dredging Mission

- **Planning**
- **Contracting**
- **Regulatory**
- **Construction**
- **Operations -Navigation**
- **General Counsel**
- **HQUSACE**
- **Engineering Research Development Center
(ERDC)**

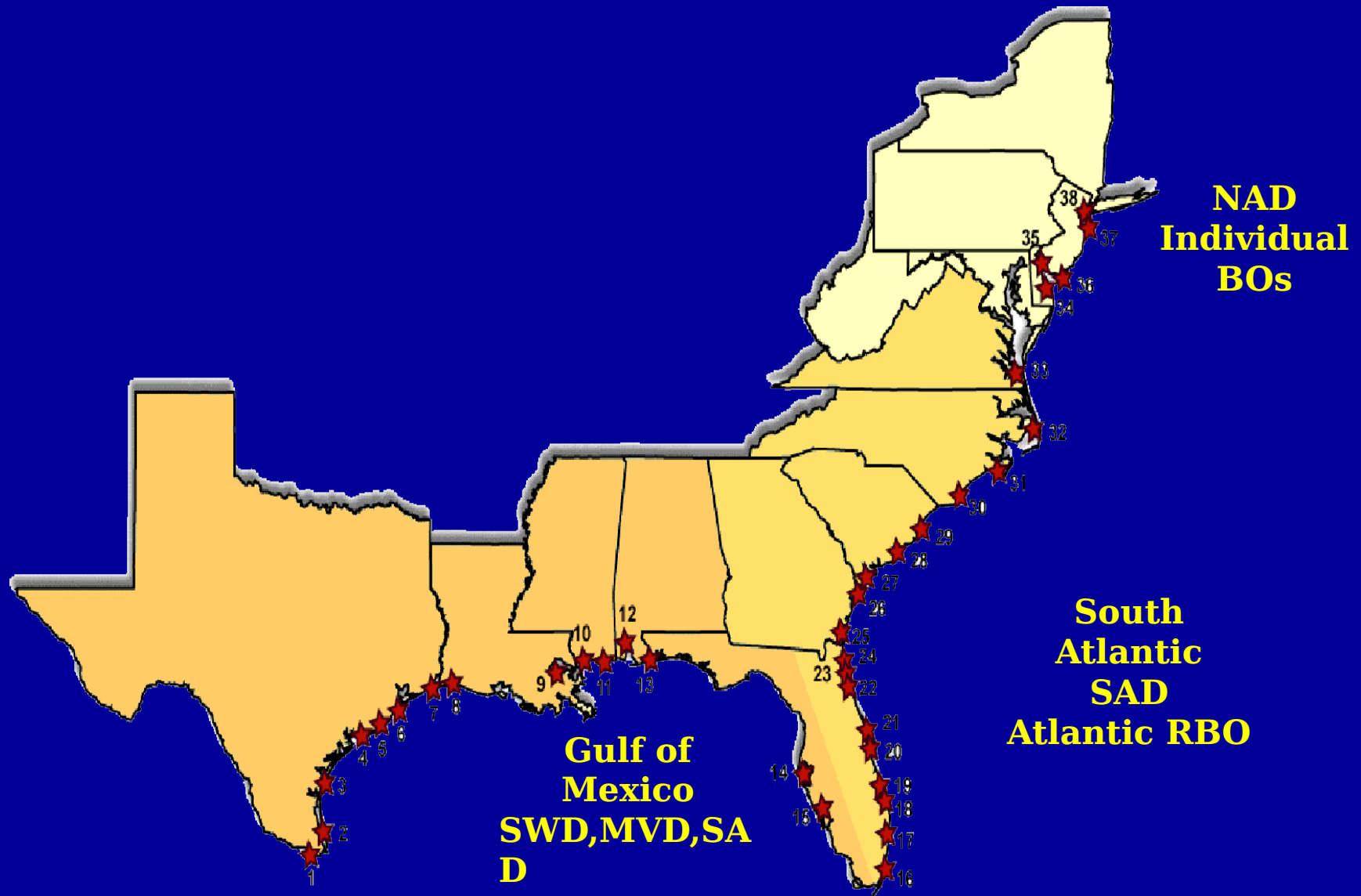
Coordination -Collaborative Goals

Districts, Divisions, ERDC, ICHDMG

(Continue)

- **Revise operational requirements for cleanup dredging**
- **Evaluate alternative contracting options**
- **Demonstrate hopper dredging in restricted channels**
- **Collect and manage biological data**
- **Evaluate alternative dredging concepts**

Channel Dredging -Sea Turtle Monitoring



South Atlantic Regional Biological Opinion (SERBO)

- **Issued: September 1997**
- **Issued to: South Atlantic Division**
- **States: North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama**
- **Districts: Wilmington, Charleston, Savannah, Jacksonville,**
- **Covers: Civil, Military Regulatory Dredging, Sand Mining**
- **Authorized Takes: Combined takes for the Division**
- **Regional Management: SAD Protocol**

Gulf of Mexico Regional Biological Opinion

- **Issued : October 2003 (amended June 2005)**
- **States: Florida/Alabama, Louisiana, Texas**
- **Divisions: South Atlantic, Mississippi Valley, Southwestern**
- **Districts: Jacksonville, Mobile, New Orleans, Galveston**
- **Authorized Takes: Separate Individual takes for each District**
- **Covers: Civil, Military, Regulatory Dredging,**

Management: Facilitated



Regional Biological Opinions (RBOs) Features

- **Alternative consultation procedures**
- **Regional in scope**
- **Flexible**
- **Adaptable**



Lessons Learned

- **Regional approach**
- **Minimize reinitiating consultation**
- **Implementation of Community of Practice**



Lessons Learned

- **Paradigm Shift**
- **Alternative consultation procedures**
- **Take reductions mission accomplishments**
- **Resource leveraging**
- **Industry's interest and education**

Lessons Learned

- **Adaptable-Flexible Management tool**
- **Clear Decision Making Process**
- **Regulatory Participation in Consultation Process**
- **Risk Management Measures**



Lessons Learned

- **Improved Operational -Management Practices**
- **Annual Reporting and Documentation**
- **Expenditure Documentation**



Lessons Learned

- **application of available scientific-technical data**
- **Centralized knowledge and data management**
- **Minimization of anecdotal and subjective information**
- **Streamline Management Processes**
- **Focused Learning and Training**

Knowledge Management and Sharing

➤ **USACE Threatened Species :**

<http://el.erdc.usace.army.mil/teesp/index.cfm>

➤ **USACE Sea Turtle Data Warehouse:**

<http://el.erdc.usace.army.mil/seaturtels/index.cfm>

➤ **USACE Planning Community-Endangered Species**

<http://www.sad.usace.army.mil/protected%20resources>

QUESTIONS?